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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MCAP](#) [FR](#) [RU](#) [SR](#) [IZ](#) [IR](#) [AF](#)
SUBJECT: USD/P EDELMAN DISCUSSES IRAN, AFGHANISTAN, MISSILE
DEFENSE, CFE AND KOSOVO WITH GOF

Classified By: Andrew Younng, Acting Political Counselor, for reasons 1
.4(b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (U) Please see paragraphs 4 and 7 for requested
Washington follow-up actions.

[1](#)2. (C) SUMMARY: On September 18, USD/P Eric Edelman and
State Department Counselor Eliot Cohen met with French
Political Director Gerard Araud to discuss Iran, Iraq,
Afghanistan, Missile Defense, CFE and Kosovo. The GOF is
working to convince its European neighbors to toughen
sanctions on Iran and may consider taking national
measures as well. The idea of a French PRT in Afghanistan
is still under consideration, but caught up in an
"interagency squabble" and the French would appreciate
receiving USG experts to discuss PRT possibilities to break
the logjam. On Iraq, the GOF is actively looking for
proposals to assist in the reconstruction of the country,
but is hampered by the security situation. The GOF
believes that the NATO allies need to agree on what they
want to say on MD at Bucharest and requested that some USG
experts present MD to the French white paper defense
commission which is currently reviewing France's security
and defense priorities. The GOF welcomes U.S. proposals to
break the impasse on CFE, but believes that the Russians
have already made the decision to suspend participation in
the treaty; however, there should be a price to pay for
withdrawal. On Kosovo, other European allies are coming
around to accepting that there may be no alternative to
supervised independence of Kosovo absent a UNSCR; some are
hoping that a UDI could be delayed until after Russian
presidential elections in March 2008. END SUMMARY.

TOUGHENING FRENCH STANCE ON IRAN

[1](#)3. (C) USD/P Edelman expressed appreciation for the recent
tough statements by French President Nicholas Sarkozy and
FM Bernard Kouchner that warned of the dangers of a nuclear
Iran. Araud responded that Sarkozy considers the problem
of Iran to be "THE major foreign policy crisis of our
time." The GOF wants to move ahead on toughening sanctions
in the Security Council, even if they would be limited in
value by the lack of commitment by the Russians and
Chinese. They believe that financial sanctions
(demonstrated by the U.S. Treasury) to have been the most
effective sanctions so far and are working to get the other
EU members on board. Germany, whose medium- and smaller
enterprises feel the painful effects of financial sanctions
more than the large multinational companies based in other
countries, is the most difficult ally to convince (although
Araud noted that Merkel had agreed in principle to the idea

at the most recent Franco-German summit). The GOF is proposing a letter to go to other EU colleagues to request that this subject be addressed within the EU, perhaps as soon as the next GAERC meeting. At the same time, the French are not excluding the possibility of taking additional national measures to increase the pressure on Iran.

FRENCH PRT IN AFGHANISTAN CAUGHT IN INTERAGENCY SQUABBLE

14. (C) USD/P Edelman proposed that the GOF consider leading a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Afghanistan, possibly in the Nimruz province which abuts the Iranian border. This could help stem the flow of weapons and materials from Iran that the Taliban and other rebels are trying to use against the Alliance in the south. Araud responded that the possibility of a PRT has been under consideration within the GOF, but the idea is currently caught up in an "interagency squabble" in which the President and the MFA support deployment, but the French MOD is resistant to it. ACTION REQUEST: Araud suggested that it would be helpful to have USG experts come to France to discuss what types of activities a French PRT could engage in and reinforce the ideas for political-civil cooperation in Afghanistan.

DEFEAT IN IRAQ IS A DEFEAT FOR THE WEST

15. (C) USD/P Edelman expressed appreciation for FM Kouchner's recent visit to Iraq. Araud responded that President

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Sarkozy believes that a defeat for the coalition forces in Iraq would be a defeat for the West. The GOF is planning to open a Consulate in Erbil and is actively looking for ideas to assist in Iraq; the problem with many proposals is the uncertain security situation. For example, to send police trainers, judges or others to Iraq, it is necessary to have a sufficiently secure environment for them to be able to conduct their mission. There is a strong French political will to act and they are hoping FM Kouchner will return to Iraq soon and have some deliverables that he can announce. Edelman suggested that the French consider assisting in the re-engagement of the UN in Iraq, perhaps by providing military personnel that could act as advisors and assist with the question of UN security. Araud returned that sending military personnel is a "red line" for the GOF, but he conceded that military advisors in a U.N. role may be seen differently than sending combat troops.

WORKING WITH RUSSIA ON MISSILE DEFENSE

16. (C) USD/P Edelman emphasized to Araud that the USG was trying hard to counter Russian concerns that current missile defense planning is really meant to be the first step in a global system that could be used in a "first strike" against Russia. He stated that the USG is not developing new warheads or new platforms (although Russia is) and that U.S. warheads and platforms are aging; the Russian theory does not take these factors into account. Furthermore, we have given the GOR evidence of Iranian capabilities, but they refuse to believe that our concern is about the Iranian threat and not Russia. Araud said that in his recent trip to Moscow, the core of the Russian arguments that he heard is: 1) that the U.S. wants global (AEGIS cruisers) capabilities; 2) the U.S. routinely

says that, "the USG currently does not intend to develop further MD capabilities" which they interpret to mean that the USG is keeping its options open to change its mind in the future; and 3) the refusal to halt discussions with Poland and the Czech Republic is clear evidence of U.S. plans to build an MD system regardless of Russian concerns.

7) (C) On next steps forward, Araud stated that it is important for the Allies to agree on what they want to say about MD at the NATO summit in Bucharest. One political reality is that there is "not one single euro" to pay for a NATO MD component (and he added that MD is not a priority of the current internal French defense review). However, he added that the GOF does not want to be difficult and they do want to know what the USG is hoping to receive at Bucharest. Edelman responded that the current USG MD proposal is a benefit for the Alliance, but NATO must be ready to fill in the gaps for short- and medium range missiles (something even the Russians acknowledge is a threat). ACTION REQUEST: Araud informed Edelman that it would be very helpful for a MD team to come from the USG to brief the Defense White Paper Commission, which is conducting a review of France's defense and security priorities, on what the MD system will do and why it is important.

CFE: BREAKING THE TREATY TO SHOW RUSSIAN STRENGTH

18. (C) Araud welcomed the U.S. proposals to break the impasse and move forward on CFE and Istanbul commitments, which show that we are trying to save the CFE treaty and respond to Russian concerns. Unfortunately, his sense is that the Russians are "looking for something cheap to smash up" to demonstrate that they are back as a strong world power. For the GOF, the test of Russian intentions will be if they show willingness to seek a compromise on some of the major issues, such as flank limits. The flank limits were already modified twice in the 1990's, so they could be adapted again, but if Russia refuses to negotiate on this issue (which is important to many allies) then it will show that the GOR does not want to save the treaty. Edelman agreed and remarked that thus far, Russia seemed more determined to wrest one-sided concessions from the Allies rather than trying to meet us halfway. Russia is also trying to justify suspending their participation in the CFE treaty on the legal argument that if the treaty allows for

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withdrawal from its provisions, that would also "imply" that the treaty authorizes a suspension. The upcoming October meetings between Rice and Gates and their Russian counterparts would hopefully be an opportunity to obtain greater Russian engagement on this issue. Araud agreed fully and stated firmly that the Russians must be aware that they cannot simply withdraw from a major arms control treaty without paying a price.

MANAGING KOSOVO'S INDEPENDENCE

19. (C) Araud remarked that negotiations on Kosovo were "going nowhere" and that there was no disposition on the part of Russia (and thus Belgrade) to be constructive. The allies must now prepare the "choreography" of how to manage a likely unilateral declaration of independence (UDI). Araud added that Thaci was traveling around Europe presenting himself as the next natural leader of Kosovo and that he was promising that he could delay any UDI until March (ie, after the Russian presidential elections). This is exactly what many European leaders want to hear; he hoped that this would not cause any transatlantic rift and expressed his worry that Thaci was raising expectations too

high among the European allies. Edelman responded that we believe that France, the UK and Germany should continue their leadership in this process and do all they can to guarantee European unity. KFOR will also have to position itself to deter any rash actions after December 10 (on the part of either Kosovo's Serbian or Albanian populations), and the E.U. will also need to discourage any attempt by the Republika Srpska to follow suit and attempt to secede from Bosnia & Herzegovina.

¶10. (C) Araud praised the actions of the European negotiator Ambassador Ischinger and said that his efforts to visit the European capitals and explain the negotiation process was very effective in convincing allies that everything possible was being attempted. Cyprus, for domestic political reasons of its own, will not be able to recognize an independent Kosovo, but the GOF hopes that the Cypriots will agree not to oppose other EU members from sending help to an independent Kosovo (such as police, trainers, etc). He added that allies will need to accept the already "defacto partition" of the north and there should not be a fight to unify Kosovo. He added that European political opinion was still divided on the question of Kosovo, as many Europeans associate the Kosovar Albanians with organized crime and see the Serbs as traumatized victims. Any violence towards Serbs living in Kosovo would be a disaster for European governments. He also advocated a "PR campaign" for the Kosovars to show that they will respect their Serbian minority population and national heritage sites.

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